

FOLLOWING FRANCIS REDFERN

BY

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PART I

**Including the Life of Redfern
and
his Preface**

Price 30p.

Following Francis Redfern

Part I will contain the story of Redfern's life, his aims in writing the History of Uttoxeter, his preface, with comments on what later research has revealed about his sources of information.

Chapter One

Introductory

IT IS NOW 104 years since the publication of the first edition of Francis Redfern's "History and Antiquities of Uttoxeter," and 84 years since the publication of his second edition.

The present population of Uttoxeter shows an increase of about 75% since Redfern wrote. Some older inhabitants and a few young persons interested in the history of their town, may have access to one or other of Redfern's two editions, yet it is unfortunate that not many copies are to be found in the town, and it is extremely unlikely that many more will now be discovered elsewhere ; (some years ago I had news of one copy being discovered in a second-hand bookshop in Philadelphia, U.S.A., and more recently I was informed by a friend in Canada that a copy had been bought in a New York bookshop).

If Redfern were alive at the present day he would certainly be at work compiling a third edition containing accounts of important events which have occurred since 1886, when his second edition was published ; but as he rather sadly remarked in his preface dated 1881, his book, which was the result of 27 years research, had been of little financial advantage to the author. Expenditure on printing and binding would now render it almost impossible for a third edition to be published at a price likely to balance costs. Further, important changes have recently increased rapidly in number and extent, (e.g. the complete re-planning of the central area around the old Brewery Yard) and to describe these fully would enlarge the new work until it far exceeded the size of the original book. We know that between 1865, the date of the first edition, and 1886 when the second appeared, Redfern's researches compelled him to increase the number of pages from 359 to 465. The first edition being in 10 point type and the second edition in 5 point type, a third comprehensive edition might now run to 1,000 pages or more, even in smaller type.

It is also true that even the second edition contained some errors and rather strangely omitted many items which we might have expected Redfern to include ; thus, though he refers occasionally to the North Staffordshire Railway, he does not give the story of its construction, nor the abandonment of many other railway proposals. For instance, it was once proposed to build a "Tean Valley Railway" which would have provided the coal mines of Cheadle with an outlet through Uttoxeter to Derby and other towns, yet the great extension of railways in this district and all over England occurred during Redfern's early days in Uttoxeter and these omissions will be noted in later pages. (It is with some regret that we shall have to record in a later chapter that recent years have seen the disappearance of many miles of railway in the district).

When errors are mentioned it must be emphasised that no carping criticism of Redfern is intended ; I have frequently spoken of the astonishing devotion and care exhibited in all his work, and I would state once again, how we must acknowledge these. Many of us may wish, with some sense of shame, that we had shown in our lives (and leisure), such unfailing diligence as he displayed ; and most of us must acknowledge too that our own opportunities have usually been far greater than those which Redfern enjoyed. When therefore, for example, we correct his derivation of the name of Uttoxeter, we are not finding fault with him ; his lack of knowledge of Anglo-Saxon etymology was in no way his fault. Moreover, many antiquarian books and magazines to which he had access contained somewhat inaccurate records when compared with modern archaeology.

The town has gone some way to commemorate our great Townsman, yet the Oak Plaque placed by the late W. T. M. Walker on Redfern's house in Carter Street, and the new Tombstone in the cemetery which names him as the Historian of Uttoxeter, can mean little to those who have only recently become citizens of Uttoxeter, and to many older persons who have no copy of his work. It is therefore proposed in this work to enable such persons first, to know more of Redfern, and then to have a more exact and up-to-date account of the old town which has become their home.

So this book is planned as follows :

- i. The life story of Francis Redfern.
- ii. A short account of the contents of each part of his history in turn, followed by some additions and the few corrections required. This will give those who have no copy

of the original an opportunity to follow the general line of Redfern's work. It will also, it is hoped, arouse their interest in Uttoxeter as it once was, and show how it has come to be what we now know.

- iii. An account of noteworthy events from 1881 until our Historian passed away in 1895, and which of course are not found in his work. This will be followed by the story of some outstanding personalities and the chief events which have brought our town to its present state in 1969. We shall see how our Urban Council came into existence in 1896 ; how in time there was a great improvement in Uttoxeter's old Water Supply before it was taken over by the South Staffordshire Waterworks. We shall see how the economic expansion of the district was brought about by two great family concerns, the Bamford Agricultural Machinery Works, and the Elkes Biscuit Factory ; also the development of the small early Milk Depot at Brookside until it reached its present size and importance.

It is hoped that this continuation of Redfern's work may prove of interest to students of local history ; but its author knows only too well that his work will, in its turn, become out-of-date as the years pass by. He can only trust that some future Historian will, in his turn, be ready to add a further contribution to the story of our old town.

Chapter Two

THE LIFE OF FRANCIS REDFERN

Travellers along the Ashbourne-Buxton road, a few miles from Ashbourne, will pass through Fenny Bentley and note the railway bridge which once carried the now disused Ashbourne-Buxton branch of the L.N.W. Railway. A short distance on the right, above this bridge, they will see the tree-lined drive leading to Tissington. On the opposite side of the road stands the Blue Bell Inn, a small public house and farm combined. It is in much the same state as it was on August 31st 1822, when Anne the daughter of Francis Woolley, married John Redfern, a country tailor. Francis Woolley held the licence of the Inn from 1802 - 1827, and it may be of significance that John Redfern stood as surety for Francis Woolley in 1822.

The Redfern family in Tissington were fairly well-to-do, for in 1809 a John Redfern (almost certainly the grandfather of the Historian) bought 5 acres of land and two messuages of which he had been tenant ; the price paid was £720 — quite a considerable sum in 1809. Ten years later Sir Henry Fitzherbert paid Redfern no less than £1,200 for the above and other property in Tissington.

By 1856 it would seem that John Redfern and his wife had moved nearer to Fenny Bentley Church, to a house and garden rented from Sir Henry Fitzherbert. It is not clear whether John Redfern was again working as a tailor, or continuing his interest in the Bell Inn and its land ; he was then 61 years of age, and had three other children besides Francis, the youngest (Samuel) being only 13 years old in 1856.

These family details do not exactly square with Francis Redfern's diary (actually written in his late years) in which he implies that he had to leave home at the age of 14, first to work for his uncle at Nobut, and then to be apprenticed as a cooper, as we have noted later. Francis speaks of Robert Spencer as his uncle, and as he had four uncles named Redfern in Tissington, it seems that Robert Spencer must have married Judith, the only sister of John Redfern, born in 1808. Robert Spencer was still farming at Nobut in 1850.

The young couple, John and Anne, took over both farm and Inn, and here in 1823 was born Francis Redfern, the future Historian of Uttoxeter. At that time there was an old-world village school at Tissington. Francis Redfern went to this school and was taught by an exceptional Master, John Smith, until he was 13 years old. Many children at that time left school at an earlier age, but Francis Redfern had shown

ability above average and had many-sided interests which induced his parents to allow him to stay at school a little longer.

In later years, Francis Redfern paid tribute to the fine work of his old Teacher and its great influence on his own wide reading throughout his life.

As a boy, Francis took part in the usual country-boy's pursuits ; it was of course an exceptionally fine district in which a country boy could spend his days. He remembered especially the custom of collecting bracken from the many woodlands and open spaces. The bracken was stored for winter use as firelighting material and as bedding for animals ; but he differed from most children of his time by reading his Bible, and books such as the poems of Coleridge, Wordsworth, Southey, and Sir Walter Scott. He was especially fond of the tales of Robin Hood and old ballads which he found in "Percy's Reliques", yet his time for this extended education was limited ; after leaving school he was employed at Mill House Farm as well as on the small home farm, and then, as noted above, he went to work for his Uncle Robert Spencer who had taken a farm at Nobut, Nr. Leigh. This farm was owned by Mr. Burton of Field, a prominent pioneer in agriculture, who was responsible for trying to introduce milking machines and ploughing by steam engines. Francis Redfern was called upon to make long journeys with horse and cart during his stay at Nobut ; he went to bring lime from the district around his old home near Dovedale to be used on his Uncle's fields. Many streams had then to be crossed by fords where there are now bridges. In his diary, written years afterwards, Francis spoke of the difficulties and even dangers of taking horses and heavily loaded carts across the fords, often after heavy rain, and we have to remember that he was then only 14 years old.

Meanwhile, according to his diary, his father's family had increased and it was decided that Francis should be apprenticed to a Trade which might promise more than he could expect from the limited prospects at home. While at home he regularly attended the Sunday School at Tissington, and in after years he used to refer to the great Methodist Revival Meetings held around his home. Though he did not wholly approve of these, they greatly influenced the character of adolescent Francis, and later led to his becoming a Wesleyan local preacher in the Uttoxeter Circuit. He was fond of recalling the hilly scenery around his home, and especially the glow in the Eastern sky at night from the famous Butterley Iron Works. This was the firm responsible in 1868 for building the remarkable roof over St. Pancras station, still noteworthy after 100 years.

He was fifteen years of age when he began a six years apprenticeship, which meant living and feeding in his Master's house. Samuel Brassington was his Master, and owner of the cooper's business in High Street, Uttoxeter. His workshops were opposite to what is now the Smithfield Inn, (these workshops later passed to the Coachbuilding firm of W. & G. Hall, who were succeeded by Mr. G. Withers). The premises were next bought by Messrs. Farmer and Sons, Pork Butchers, and these buildings were dismantled in 1969 as part of the plans for redevelopment of the central area of the town, round the Old Brewery Yard. This re-development took up a considerable space, extending eastwards from High Street to Bradley Street and Church Street.

Here Francis Redfern lived and learned his trade, which was principally barrel making, but also comprised the manufacture of hooped wooden vessels for measuring produce of all kinds, cheese vats and other farm and dairy utensils. Redfern himself used to speak of making "Gauns" and "Kinmels". All this work required a high degree of accurate workmanship, and the industry, like clock-case making, flourished in Uttoxeter as there was a good supply of oak timber in the plentiful woodlands of this district.

The young apprentice had a hard life, working from 6 a.m. frequently until 8 p.m. Three times a year he was allowed to visit his home at Fenny Bentley, walking in both directions. He used to recall that during his apprenticeship he only received 3 /6d. as pocket money.

When his training period was over, he worked as a fully qualified journeyman for a further 5½ years, entering the employment of Messrs. Earp & Keates, who then owned the High Street Brewery.

His determination to improve on his early education led him, whenever it was possible, to attend Lectures and Penny Readings as they were then termed ; these opportunities were provided by a growing number of Societies, promoted in the mid-19th century by literary gentlemen in the town, amongst whom can be mentioned the Rev. W. W. Harvey, Headmaster of Alleyne's Grammar School, the Rev. J. Cooke, and members of the Vernon, Bladon and Hawthorn families.

In his diary he noted the various types of books which he studied. These were publications on religion, history and astronomy ; lives of famous men, such as Lord Nelson and Benjamin Franklin ; Chambers' Encyclopaedia of Literature, and even Emerson's Essays and Orations.

He realised that his studies would be more effective and that he would be really "educated" if he knew Latin and Greek, so he tried to learn these unaided, but found that his leisure opportunities were so limited that he had to abandon

such studies, but the institution of Library facilities in the town gave him other opportunities for self-education which he did not neglect.

He wrote in his diary that his work as a cooper at the Brewery was hard drudgery, and it was not until he was 27 years of age that he could afford to marry. His bride was Ellen Johnson of Stramshall, a village where many of his antiquarian researches were carried out. In 1851 he determined to set up in trade for himself and bought the cooper's business of Mr. W. Allen in Carter Street; the old half-timbered house still stands there, and an Oak Plaque was fixed on the house by the late Mr. W. T. M. Walker in the early nineteen hundreds to commemorate the Uttoxeter Historian. William Allen's Dye Works in Pinfold Street were also acquired by Francis Redfern, but this venture was not very successful.

He never spared himself, either in his business, his duties on Sundays as a local preacher which often meant long journeys on foot, or in devoting his leisure to investigate any places which could throw light on former events in this district.

Among his first writings were items of news appearing in the Derbyshire Advertiser in 1855. Some years afterwards he recalled that he regularly contributed to this newspaper, to the Staffordshire Advertiser, to the Uttoxeter New Era, to the Gentleman's Magazine, to an Archaeology Magazine and Jewitt's Reliquary. He corresponded with antiquarians as far away as London, but it was an article by the American writer, Nathaniel Hawthorne, in a London magazine in 1857 which caused Francis Redfern to begin his main literary work "The History and Antiquities of Uttoxeter" published in 1865. Eight years before this date, Hawthorne had paid a special visit to Uttoxeter to see where Dr. Samuel Johnson had done his famous penance. Johnson had disobeyed his father by refusing to come from Lichfield to take over the latter's book-stall one market day when old Michael was ill. The story of the penance had appeared in later editions of Boswell's "Life of Johnson", and Thomas Carlyle had described the spectacle of Samuel Johnson in his old age, standing bare-headed in the rain in the Market Place, jeered at by the bystanders, as "one of the grandest and saddest pictures we can paint". Redfern refers to this and other records of the Penance on pages 162 to 174 in the 1886 edition. Hawthorne had questioned schoolboys and others in Uttoxeter, but found nobody who could point to the exact spot where Johnson had stood, or could indeed say anything about the penance. His rather uncomplimentary comments in the magazine article, referred to above, caused Redfern to resolve that future inhabitants of Uttoxeter (Uttoxeteronians) was Redfern's

term) should have the opportunity of knowing Johnson's story ; he determined also that all other important facts of local history that he could discover should be written down for posterity.

It was fortunate that Redfern's previous wide reading, his great interest in the town and countryside, and above all his habit of patient industry well qualified him for the task.

For about eight years he devoted almost the whole of his spare time to making notes on anything that could be included in his proposed History. He explored and often excavated local sites where evidence of past days could be discovered ; he compiled short records of prominent local families, buildings, legends, and customs, some of which had even then died out or were being forgotten. He visited and, as far as his work allowed, ascertained the origins of surrounding villages, their overlords, and their churches ; he carried out research on local trades, recording many which had become obsolete but which had left traces in names, old buildings and fields, e.g. Silver Street and its connection with Mr. Copestake's jewellery manufacture, Tinkers' Lane (now Stone Road), and its old cottage forges.

He used his undoubted artistic skill in drawing and painting scenes and objects, though some of the best of those (one of Tissington Hall, now in the Salt Library, Stafford), were not reproduced in his book. This Library has also preserved a number of notes and fragments in Redfern's handwriting.

From all these and similar collections of material came his first edition of "The History and Antiquities of Uttoxeter" published in 1865.

A frontispiece was a copy of an old Map of the town, hanging in the Church, and reproduced by Messrs. Bemrose of Derby ; the title of this map runs, "The Town of Uttoxeter, described A.D. 1658 by Peter Lightfoote". (This map will be considered in more detail later).

By the efforts of Mr. R. H. Richardson, copies of this map made by the late E. J. Beetham, Art Master at Alleyne's Grammar School, are now on sale for the benefit of Church Funds.

His early boyhood at Fenny Bentley and Tissington (where a branch of the Fitzherbert family held sway) and his subsequent life at Uttoxeter, had led him to have a high regard for the "Gentry" ; he therefore dedicated his book to the Earl of Shrewsbury and Talbot, one of the Lords of the Manor of Uttoxeter (though this title at that time was only nominal). The close connection of the town with this celebrated noble family still survives in the "Old Talbot Inn"

and the "Shrewsbury and Talbot Inn". (Redfern was the author of a "Guide to Alton Towers" published by Mr. Brocklehurst, Printer and Bookseller, Uttoxeter).

Alton Towers and its famous Gardens had then only been in existence about 30 years, and is still one of Staffordshire's attractions, though it has ceased to be the family seat.

What we know as Redfern's first edition of 1865 was really a re-written enlarged version of his first History, but he was allowed to make use of an old Manuscript book which had been lying in a lawyer's office in Uttoxeter for over 200 years ; this gave him so much material that, as we shall see later, he set to work and re-wrote his History — a task which many writers would have declined.

The general reception of the History was pleasing to its author, but he recorded some years later in his diary, "It did me no good in a pecuniary sense, and beyond some little credit accorded to me, I am not aware that it benefited me in any way. It has led me to a rather extensive correspondence with various persons, some being of considerable distinction and influence. I should perhaps prize one by Mrs. Howitt, and one by the late Mr. Bateman as much as any".

In spite of continual ill-health, Redfern immediately began further research with a view to a more comprehensive edition later, for he was aware of many omissions, and even a few errors. Meanwhile he had entered the service of Messrs. C. Bunting Ltd. of the "Cross Keys Hotel" (now the offices of W. S. Bagshaw and Sons), and remained with the firm for many years.

He was busy with his pen on other matters ; we have already mentioned the "Guide to Alton Towers", and to this he added "The Life and Work of George Heath, the Staffordshire Moorland Poet", also "Dove Valley Rhymes" ; the last named was not great poetry, and Redfern's knowledge of Samuel Bentley, the Uttoxeter Poet, perhaps led to what he said "he had not attempted before". But some lines are not without merit, and one can detect evidences that Redfern knew Byron, Scott, and Wordsworth, and what was typical of their work. Some of his verses are worth noting too for their references to the beauty of the district, and its ancient history and local legends.

Redfern also contributed papers to the North Staffs. Field Club — on one occasion he led a party on foot over Eaton Banks to Rocester, and back to Uttoxeter via Combridge and Crakemarsh. He was also a regular writer for the "Staffordshire Advertiser" and the "Derbyshire Advertiser". In the last-named newspaper appeared from time to time, short notices of Tissington. These were later collected into a large

manuscript volume, which he wished to publish. However, as he was unable to obtain sufficient support for this from subscribers, the large volume now lies, unpublished, in the Salt Library, Stafford.

But Redfern's greatest task between 1865 and 1881 was the re-writing and enlargement of the 1865 edition of his History. His patience and thoroughness is shown by his method of preparing for this work ; fortunately the whole of his notes and additions are preserved in the Salt Library. His methodical habits are evident in this ; he took two volumes of the 1865 book, pasted their pages on the larger pages of the MS. book, so that while one side of each printed 1865 page was covered up, the other side was left ; and to this he added, in some places, such a mass of new material that the 1886 edition was really a new book in itself ; the author only retained what he found worth keeping, and the added material was carefully revised and, in some places, corrected before being included.

The Salt Library collection of Redfern's notes etc. also has sketches by his own hand which were not printed in the 1886 edition, almost certainly on grounds of expense, which is a matter for regret. I would like here to give an account of one such omission, for it shows how little escaped him, and how the second edition would have gained by their inclusion.

Many Uttoxeter parishioners must over and over again have passed by the two alabaster tombs near the West door of St. Mary's, and perhaps spent some time in trying to decipher the inscriptions. (Redfern's careful sketch of one tomb was published in both editions). When the present Vicar of Uttoxeter, the Rev. W. H. Osmond Moss, soon after his arrival, noted that a stone cadaver (effigy of a corpse) was lying behind the tombs, he asked a number of persons about it, but only a few knew of its existence. (It had previously been kept on a shelf below the West window in a poorly lighted space). But Redfern had discovered it, and mentioned it in his first edition as a relic of the Church prior to the rebuilding of 1828. He even took it down from its dark corner and made a sketch of it ; this sketch was intended to go into the 1886 book, but as noted above, was after all left among Redfern's notes in the Salt Library, where it was discovered in 1967. We can only admire the keen observation of the old Historian, and regret the omission of this and other pictures from his book.

Redfern's antiquarian researches led to a special honour ; the London Archaeological Society visited Uttoxeter in 1872 and invited Redfern to lecture to their meeting ; his address was much appreciated and was published in the Journal of the Association.

It is remarkable that his writing, and indeed his daily work, had to be carried on under circumstances which would have daunted a less resolute man. One hint of this stress is revealed in the Preface to the first edition, where he wrote : "My work is not the production of a person either devoted to a literary calling, or living in worldly ease. Being employed as I am at a mechanical trade, I have been able to devote but very little time to its compilation except at nights, after the suspension of labour". In the Preface to the 2nd edition (which we have shown to be the result of long revision of the first) he apologises for the long delay in publication — his writing was ready in 1881 but he could not arrange the publication until five years later. "The delay", he wrote, was "partly owing to long illness, compulsory absence from home, weariness, and other reasons I need not mention". Some of these "other reasons" are to be found in the inscriptions on the original family tombstone in Uttoxeter Cemetery (now replaced by one which renders him due honour as the "Historian of Uttoxeter", with the text "That ye may tell them that come after").

His wife and he mourned no fewer than five children who died in infancy ; when describing the epidemic of diphtheria which brought death to so many of those living in Stone Road, Carter Street and Bradley Street, he adds a brief, poignant comment "in 1861, a little before which date, as I remember with sorrow, many children were carried off by diphtheria".

We must also note another difficulty which hampered Redfern through nearly all the years spent in compiling his history. He was never a really prosperous man, and some of his business activities brought him meagre reward, e.g. the dye-works in Pinfold Street, which he took over from Mr. W. Allen.

He must also have felt some disappointment with the lack of support which he had every right to expect from the townspeople for whose history he laboured so long ; yet he only hints at his disappointment in the 1886 Preface : "I must thank subscribers for their names in support of the undertaking, although it is truly desirable the number should have been more", and "work which has engaged my attention about 27 years".

It would have been a source of some pleasure to record that his later years were happier, and that the town had shown more appreciation of such a worthy citizen. But one must state facts, however sad. His wife, a true helpmeet for over 40 years, passed away in 1891, and Redfern himself followed in 1895 ; he had suffered from partial paralysis for some years, and there can be little doubt that at least one cause of this was mental strain, and his tireless determination to make his life's work both comprehensive and reliable.

In the lobby of the new Council Chamber in High Street there is a photograph of Francis Redfern. It shows, as one might have expected, a man of fine physique — his early life in the countryside made him so ; but his pale complexion reminds us of the hours spent over research and writing long into the night ; yet his face shows also the stern self-confidence of one who dedicated himself to years of toil, not for himself but for posterity.

The oak plaque on his old-world home, and the new Memorial stone erected in the Cemetery in 1962 should remind townspeople of the debt they owe to a fine, nay, a truly great man.

Here it is appropriate to relate the circumstances in which contact with Redfern's descendants was made. After the passing of his two daughters, who had occupied their father's old half-timbered house in Carter Street, few residents of Uttoxeter knew anything of the Redfern family.

In the early years of the Second World War, some visitors of this family came to Uttoxeter and tried to find Redfern's grave in the Cemetery, but failed to do so and went away disappointed. The present writer was away on other duties or he could have shown them the place. Unfortunately the visitors left no address, but there followed an almost incredible encounter in an Air Raid Shelter in London between Miss Adlem, of Oldfields Girls' School, and Redfern's grandson. The latter noticed some local items in a paper which Miss Adlem was reading, and made himself known. He and his wife began a correspondence with Miss Adlem, which was, however, broken when Mr. Redfern, an engineer connected with an American firm, lost his life when the ship in which he was sailing was torpedoed in the Eastern Mediterranean. His wife did not survive her loss very long, but his daughter, Mrs. Joan French, of Ipswich, and his son, Mr. Peter Redfern, of Rochdale, have continued their interest in Uttoxeter, the latter being present at the dedication of the Memorial Stone in Uttoxeter Cemetery.

The town owes a debt to Miss Adlem for her keen interest in Redfern's memory and her following up of the extraordinary incident which has enabled the Urban Council to obtain the photograph mentioned above.

It is hoped that this account of the life of Francis Redfern may keep his memory green in the town which he loved, and that (to use his own word) "Uttoxeteronians" will "tell those who come after" about his long and unselfish labours.

Footnote : Other writings by Francis Redfern were — "A Guide to Alton Towers" ; "The Life of George Heath, the Staffs. Moorland Poet" ; "Dove Valley Rhymes" ; "The History of Tissington" (never published owing to lack of support).

Chapter Three

REDFERN'S PREFACE TO THE 1865 EDITION

Though Redfern's Preface was only 4½ pages in length, there are many important matters contained in it, as will become evident as we proceed.

The 1865 edition of the book was dedicated to the Earl of Shrewsbury and Talbot, one of the Lords of the Manor of Uttoxeter, who in 1841 had won a protracted lawsuit by which his right to the Title and to the Alton and other estates was confirmed (twenty pages later in the History were devoted by Redfern to an account of the High Court and House of Lords proceedings, and the public celebrations in Uttoxeter when the case was won). In 1865 the title "Lord of the Manor of Uttoxeter" was really only nominal, for the Manorial rights had been given or sold by King Charles I to one of his courtiers in 1625. A survey of the Manor was made then, and after a syndicate of local wealthy gentlemen had bought the rights for £3,120, they sold or rented the property to minor citizens. All this is related by Redfern on page 67 of the first edition and page 109 of the second book. This information came mainly from the "History of Tutbury" by Sir Oswald Mosley, grandfather of the present holder of the title. At some time during the period 1625 - 1865 the Earls of Shrewsbury must have purchased lands in Uttoxeter by which they joined other prominent families, e.g. the Sneyd-Kynnersleys of Loxley, in being "Lords of the Manor".

The Shrewsbury and Talbot connection with Uttoxeter remains in two names of Inns — the "Old Talbot" in the Market Place, still showing old beams and a small "penthouse" front, and the "Shrewsbury and Talbot" at the junction of Carter Street and Balance Street, often termed the "Far Talbot" in past years.

Redfern's early days at Tissington School, where the Fitzherbert family have held sway for many years, rather disposed him to regard the aristocracy with considerable reverence, a custom which had persisted from the middle ages and still remained in village life in Victorian times. Hence the dedication, and later in the book, the long account of the Shrewsbury Peerage Case, which had really very little to do with Uttoxeter.

But the important part of the preface gives the main reason for Redfern's self-appointed task in compiling his history. As we have noted in Chapter 2, the famous American writer Nathaniel Hawthorne (Redfern omitted the final "e") had visited Uttoxeter in 1857 to see the place where Dr. Samuel

Johnson had done his penance in expiation of his disobedience to his father, Michael Johnson, the Lichfield bookseller. Michael, a native of Cubley, came to Uttoxeter Market each Wednesday and set up his bookstall. (Redfern does not appear to have known that Michael Johnson was held in high esteem by, among other local families, the Boothbys of Derbyshire. But recently published letters show that Michael Johnson was consulted not only about books, but about the education of the Boothby children. (Long after both Michael and Samuel Johnson were dead, another famous Derbyshire man, the Sculptor Chantrey, added to the glories of Lichfield Cathedral by his beautiful "Sleeping Children", two of Prebendary Robinson's family, who had perished in a fire in 1812).

One day Michael was ill, and could not travel from Lichfield to Uttoxeter Market, so he asked his son to take his place. Young Samuel evidently thought that an Oxford student would be disgraced by such work and refused his father's request. Fifty years later to the day, Samuel stood in Uttoxeter Market Place, bareheaded in the rain ; the market folk stared at the solemn old man standing with bowed head, unmoved by the jeers of some onlookers, for the common folk of those days were only too ready to look on such an unusual sight with little sympathy ; they were more likely to be hostile, or at least contemptuous.

On returning to Miss Seward's house at Lichfield, where he was staying, Johnson apologised for his absence during the day, and explained where he had been and why. A young clergyman, Rev. Henry White, was present, and recorded later that the penitent old man said — "Fifty years ago, Madam, on this day, I committed a breach of filial piety which has ever since lain heavy on my mind . . . going into the market I uncovered my head, and stood with it bare an hour . . . exposed to the sneers of the standers-by, and the inclemency of the weather — a penance by which I trust I have propitiated heaven for this, the only instance of contumely to my father".

The exact date of the penance is still uncertain, but most authorities agree that "fifty years ago, Madam, on this day" must have been between about 1727 and 1731 ; the date 1784 originally given on the Memorial in Uttoxeter Market Place must have been incorrect, and between 1777 and 1781 was the correct period. Johnson had entered Pembroke College, Oxford, in 1727, but had to leave through financial difficulties without completing the usual three year course. He seems to have remained rather disconsolate at home for a year or more. After his later successes, Johnson's reputation became world-wide, especially in the United States ; hence the visit of Nathaniel Hawthorne, who had held the Office of United

States Consul at Liverpool. He came to Uttoxeter in 1857, expecting that any inhabitant would show him the penance spot ; but he went away disappointed, almost angry, for not only did he fail to find the spot, but neither grown men nor schoolboys could tell him anything of Dr. Johnson. Hawthorne expressed his concern at such indifference among Uttoxeter people in an article in a London Magazine, and this first gave Redfern the idea of compiling his history of the town.

He states in his preface that after some years of research he was allowed to consult an old MS. book which had lain unnoticed in a lawyer's office in Balance Street for at least 200 years. We do not know who the original lawyers were, but in Redfern's time the firm was Messrs. Blair, Jervis and Gould. Of these partners, Mr. P. O. Jervis was the father of two ladies whose name is recalled by Jervis House, once Dove Bank House ; many people in Uttoxeter must still remember the two ladies who were voluntary workers for every good cause in the town.

Redfern does not say how this MS. Survey of the town (the late C. D. Miller first noted that it is really a survey of the Manor only) came to be attributed to Peter Lightfoot, the third son of Thomas Lightfoot, Vicar of Uttoxeter for 36 years. Nor does he say that the map, which was printed in the 1865 edition of the history, was not the plan said to be in the survey, but a copy of an old Map still hanging in the Church, which does not show any manorial land beyond the southern boundary of the town, though the Survey itself lists many lands reaching to the Marchington boundary. Moreover, though Redfern consistently refers to Peter Lightfoot as a physician, he does not state how Peter was qualified. Now Redfern was, as far as his knowledge permitted, a most reliable man, and we cannot believe that he had not evidence, from some source or other, on those matters.

With regard to some of these uncertainties, it has needed a long and difficult research to make clear some errors which Redfern unfortunately accepted as fact ; indeed, there are still some obscurities which remain, and it will possibly be most useful to discuss all matters relating to the Survey and the Old Map in this part of our revision of Redfern's History.

First we will deal with the Survey itself, a MS. book which passed from Messrs. Blair, Jervis & Gould to Redfern, and later to the late A. B. Torrance, a life-long acquaintance of Redfern's. Finally the old MS. book reached me from my uncle, and I went through it with the late C. D. Miller. He at once pointed out that the Survey (which takes up only about half of the MS. book) was not a survey of the town, but only of the Manorial lands of Uttoxeter — indeed one page in the book has the heading (in "legal" script as used for all

the headings) : "Here followeth an abstract of the whole Mannour of Uttoxeter". After considerable search I have established that the survey was a copy of a document now in the Public Record Office, to which I was kindly directed by Sir Robert Somerville, K.C.V.O., of the Duchy of Lancaster Record Office. This document is a Survey made in 1629, and was signed on March 8th 1629 by John Byrche and Samuel Parsons, "by vertue of His Majesty's Commission forth of his Highness' Court of the Duchy of Lancaster to them and others directed".

This survey has ruled columns on each page, which were exactly copied by whoever wrote the old book used by Redfern, with other parts showing first, the "Chauntrie Lands of Uttoxeter", next, the lands of the "Chauntrie of Doveridge", then the "Windsor" lands, then the "Glebe Lands in Uttoxeter", next the "Demesne Lands", then the "Portwaye or Walter's Land"; then "The Common or Wast belonging to Uttoxeter called the Highe Wood". This is followed by "The Index", and the "abstract of the whole Mannour of Uttoxeter" which has already been mentioned.

All these divisions are followed exactly in the book which Messrs. Blair, Jervis & Gould handed to Redfern. The only differences are that this later book contains marginal and other additions which were obviously inserted by a person who had access to the original survey made for the Duchy of Lancaster, and who also had knowledge of changes in ownership or tenancy. For example, where the original survey lists Francis Kynnersley as holding the Manor of Loxley, the later book has "Francis now Thomas" in the margin. Similarly, the 1629 Survey has Margery Mynors, widow, as owning various lands (including "One capital Messuage adjoining to the Highe Wood"), while the later copy has in the margin "Margery now Thomas Mynors".

It is doubtful if at the present day we can discover how the copying of these items came about, or who was concerned. Thus we know that Francis Kynnersley died in 1634 ; we also know (through the Duchy of Lancaster records), that Samuel Parsons was employed in making a survey of Ealing in 1636. It seems reasonable to conclude that he was a Duchy Official surveyor, possibly an employee of the King in other ways.

How the scrivener (or Peter Lightfoot himself), who wrote out the copy of the Duchy survey of 1629, obtained access to the documents is not clear, unless, as the late C. D. Miller thought, the local legal advisers of the Lords of the Manor were supplied with a copy of the original. If this is correct, it would seem that Peter Lightfoot might have been employed by these lawyers. He was already holding as tenant about

90 acres of land, and during the Civil War was paid for providing a team of horses to help in transporting the "magazine" or ammunition column of the Parliament from Uttoxeter to Tamworth. He was also paid by the town for a journey to London in 1646 in connection with an augmentation to the Church, his expenses amounting to £5 (a large sum at that time). It is perhaps worth noting that in 1646 the Parliament had won complete control of all government, and yet some Church of England officials must have been working normally. It would also appear that Peter Lightfoot had in some way avoided the total loss of his horse-team ; when one considers the number of visits to Uttoxeter made by both belligerents in the Civil War, and their common habit of compulsory purchase (or mere taking) of horses, it seems that Peter was in some way exempt from such loss.

We have to assume that Redfern must have found some reference to Peter Lightfoot's qualifications as a physician, but intensive research so far throws no light on this question ; a will has been found showing that in Peter's time an apothecary named Sam Freeman was in practice in Uttoxeter ; when he died, two years before Peter's death, his stock of drugs etc. was valued at £65, which was at that time no small sum. One has to ask, "Was Peter apprenticed to, or a partner of S. Freeman ?"

Twenty-five years after Peter Lightfoot's death, John Bray, another apothecary whose life in the town may well have overlapped Peter's time, died, leaving professional items valued at £85. In 1662 we have the will of Richard Bullock, barber surgeon ; he must have known Peter Lightfoot, who died in 1677. Bullock's house had a parlour, hall, shop with a partition, and a stable ; he was probably only called upon to perform blood-letting, a common practice in that period ; the custom of displaying a blood-stained rag on a pole outside the barber-surgeon's house has come down to the present day in the form of the red and white painted pole outside a barber's shop. Redfern (page 241, 2nd edition), recorded the burial of Robert Clark Barker (or Barber), Surgeon, on April 2nd, 1644.

It is remarkable that the manorial survey mentioned above, which was brought up-to-date marginally about 1658, contains no record of any of these three persons. This seems to confirm that the inhabitants mentioned in the Survey were tenants under the Manor of Uttoxeter, and that there were others whose names and lands did not belong to the Manor. The names of some such persons are to be found on the old map referred to above ; for instance houses and lands of Deavenport, Barkland, and Goodall are all to be found in the map, but none of these were mentioned in the Survey.

Moreover, at the time of Peter Lightfoot, it was necessary for a Surgeon (as indeed for a schoolmaster), to be licensed by the Bishop of the diocese before he could carry on his profession, and there is no record of such a licence being issued to Peter Lightfoot, though licences are recorded for other persons. As Peter's father, Thomas Lightfoot, was Vicar of Uttoxeter, it seems unlikely that authority was obtained from any other Bishop ; and although diocesan matters became confused during the Civil War, Peter Lightfoot was approaching 40 years of age when war broke out in 1642, and one would have expected some record of his work as a physician or surgeon before he reached that age.

He must have been a prominent townsman, and if indeed he practised as a surgeon, must have qualified long before that date. Redfern calls him (page 331 2nd edition) "a very ingenious man and practical physician in Uttoxeter". He was also "often in commissions for ending differences". Redfern does not give the source of this last statement, and yet one feels that he must have had some evidence of it. He witnessed a number of signatures on legal documents copied into the second part of the old MS. book following the copy of the Lancaster Survey, especially those connected with various charitable gifts to the town, and in an old Parish chest containing records of apprenticeships, his signature often occurs. In addition to these, he is recorded, almost certainly at first hand, as taking part in the dispute between the town and the King's men, who in 1635 - 1637 were engaged, as Redfern quotes (p.p. 109 - 128, 2nd edition), in an attempt to deprive the town of its rights in the great woodland area to the South. A full account, with copies of all the various documents was added to the Survey book, and internal evidence, by marginal notes, shows how Peter regarded this underhand procedure.

It had been set on foot by the summoning of several citizens (including among others, Lawrence Dawson, the Curate, John Dynes, John Carter, Thomas Mastergent and Peter Lightfoot) to appear at the Court of the Duchy of Lancaster. These citizens were to be pressed by the Court to acknowledge that the Uttoxeter Ward was really the King's, and that only a part should be fenced off for the benefit of the town. A full account of all this will be found later ; here we have to note particularly that when all the Uttoxeter representatives agreed to the Duchy Court's Order, Peter Lightfoot was brave enough to refuse. This might have brought him into the hands of the Star Chamber with most unpleasant consequences. Yet all that happened was that the Court sent him away, and so the King could now be

informed that the submission of the town's representatives was unanimous.

There is internal evidence in the second half of the old MS. book that Peter Lightfoot did indeed write comments on the story of how Uttoxeter Common Woodland was reduced in size, by what (almost certainly in Peter Lightfoot's writing) is called "cunning plotting and contrivements". In one part about the efforts made at the Duchy Court to obtain signatures from all the Uttoxeter townsmen summoned to Derby, there is the account of Peter's refusal, and he there refers to "myself".

The whole account is given in *copies* of all the Duchy of Lancaster official documents in the case ; so it seems clear that Peter Lightfoot had access to these legal records, and that he was either a scrivener himself or had a friend who was such. Expert archivists have stated that the handwriting in the MS. book is almost certainly that of more than one person.

But there is no doubt that Peter's caustic marginal comments on the efforts of the King's men to deprive Uttoxeter commoners of their privileges were correctly noted by Redfern ; also that Redfern was right in stating that Peter's version of the proceedings was much more discreditable to the "cunning plotters" than an account which failed to give prominence to the unworthy "contrivements" ; we can tell that Redfern was here referring to Mosley's "History of Tutbury" from which he quotes in several places in his work.

Summing up the facts which are now clear, we can say that Peter Lightfoot, though not responsible for much which Redfern assumed, nevertheless was concerned in many matters of importance to the town, and was ready to undergo serious personal risk on the town's behalf.

As to the incorrect assumptions made by Redfern, little blame can be laid upon him. The discovery and use of the MS. book supplied to him by Messrs. Blair, Jervis & Gould was indeed exciting and so important that, as we have seen above, Redfern entirely re-wrote his first account, and must have faced an enormous amount of work before his book appeared in 1865. In a few instances he misread the old script ; for example, on page 114 (1886 edition) he makes Peter Lightfoot's comment read "by those cunning plottings and contrivings they may find out the toyle" ; this should be "by those cunning plottings and contrivements they may find out the like". This error caused Redfern in the previous paragraph to state that the account of the matter was a "work of much toyle", though in reality it was mainly a question of copying the documents of the case and bringing them up to date. Still, it seems certain that Redfern was quite correct

in giving credit to Peter Lightfoot for his exposure of the “plottings and contrivements”.

In our consideration of other parts of Redfern’s “History” we shall return to the various surveys of the town, to the old map of which Mr. R. H. Richardson has secured the re-printing and publication, and above all to the Lightfoot family, members of which were prominent for many years after their connections with Uttoxeter had ceased.

Chapter Four (Redfern, Chapter I)

(References are to Redfern's 2nd Edition 1886)

Redfern's Preface to his second edition was written in 1881, after, he says, 27 years of work on the subject. But the book was not printed until 1886, partly owing to the author's ill-health, and partly because patrons did not come forward in sufficient numbers to ensure financial success. The book was priced at 12 /6, and brought little profit to the author. It is rather sad to relate that during 1967, I was offered a copy for £5, and since then have heard of copies being sold for £15.

In his summary of the contents of Chapter I, Redfern included Natural Scenery, Interesting Geological Notes, and the Etymology of Uttoxeter. It will be necessary to bring the Geology up-to-date, and to correct the somewhat fanciful derivations of the name of the town, but Redfern's description of the beauty of our countryside, reinforced by quoting from our local poet Samuel Bentley, the stanza beginning "Uttoxeter, sweet are thy views!" cannot fail to give pleasure. "Its neighbouring hills, its quiet lanes, its pleasant meadows and peaceful and charming valleys"—Redfern thus describes our countryside, together with referring to those "whom we have tenderly loved, who sleep peacefully in the sacred enclosure of the Churchyard". Such passages exhibit Redfern's command of language ; by any standard these are fine pieces of English prose, coming from one who (in his own words) was "not a person either devoted to a literary calling or living in worldly ease". This, of course, was partly due to his natural ability, and partly to his wide reading which we have already noted in an earlier chapter on his life.

One surprising omission here is Redfern's failure to quote from Mary Howitt's descriptions in several of her works dating from about 1830. He was proud of his correspondence with her, and must surely have read her references to Timber Lane and its masses of wild flowers, the primroses in Bramshall Wood (now the field where the reservoir has been built). The wood she describes thus : "A quiet shady place it was — a beautiful clear stream running all through it, with its bright gravelly bottom ; and the starwort and the blue-bells and the bright yellow gem-like flowers and emerald green leaves of the golden saxifrage dipping into it — and there were primroses by thousands and blue-bells, till the wood was azure with them".

Redfern himself, thirty years later, wrote "one of such spots, with its neighbouring hills, its quiet lanes, its pleasant meadows and peaceful and charming valleys, has been raversed by our feet more than others". We have seen on previous

pages (*Life of Redfern*), that his chief boyhood memories were of Dovedale scenery, and his many travels in later life when he was a Wesleyan local preacher took him out into the countryside and its villages.

He goes on to give details of local history, which he says, "cannot fail being perused with delight, awakening some tender chord of affection and memory".

Uttoxeter is "a town of great antiquity and noted for its former position in the honour of Tutbury". (Here the word honour has a special meaning ; it was a legal term for a number of adjoining manors held by one nobleman who was himself under a superior overlord). Redfern also gives other examples of Uttoxeter's former history — its markets, its special difficulties during the great Civil War between King and Parliament in the 17th century, and its many distinguished worthies, whose careers we shall give in later chapters.

Redfern proceeds to consider the many and various derivations of the name of the town. He notes the Domesday Book version "Wotocheshede", and mentions the difficulties of the Norman scribes who compiled the Book for William the Conqueror in 1086. These scribes were often ignorant of the Anglo-Saxon language, but Redfern gives Uttoxeshather as a form of spelling about 1300 ; this in turn became Uttoxester and Uttoxeste by the time of Camden (1586). Redfern knew that Camden believed the name to be Saxon in spite of its Latin appearance, but after considering the many forms of the word (Utcester, Ulcester, Uttok-vester, Uttoxeshather, Tocester, Otteshather, Uttoxeshate, Tokestter, Wutokesher, Wittokshather, Uttoxhautr, Taksett, and Hutockeshorther), he noted that some of these closely resembled the form given in Domesday Book. But he was led by his erroneous belief that Uttoxeter was a Roman station into rejecting the Saxon derivation and accepting the possibility of other word formations, e.g. wudu-sheade (woodland shade, which indeed is Saxon), or even Toot-ceastre, Roman for the camp where an Eastern God Tent was worshipped. Redfern quotes an old book of 1793 giving this belief. Actually, the word toot (usually with hill added) is Saxon for a "look-out" post. Redfern's name "Toothill" has been adopted right up to the present day in two places — the tumulus or burial mound on the High Wood overlooking the line of the Dove Valley, the Weaver Hills, and Uttoxeter Church Spire as it rises above the town ; and another hill between Madeley Farm, Beamhurst and Hollington has also been marked "Toot-hill" in the Ordnance Survey Maps. We shall have occasion to refer to both of these Toothills later.

The great linguist, Prof. Ekwall, has been recognised as the most reliable authority on place names in Western Europe ; his derivation of Uttoxeter's Domesday name is Wotoches-Hede, i.e. Wutuch's or Wotoch's Heath, the "s" being the ending of the *first* part of the word, and *not* the beginning of the second part. It may be mentioned here that the late Canon Buscot more than once discussed this with me, and we both thought that these Anglo-Saxon words gave the correct names.

Prof. Ekwall found another example of the name Wotoc, Witoc, or Wutuc ; this is "Wixhill", which was originally "Witoc's hill". It would seem that a Saxon immigrant and his family settled on the Heath (which was then, except perhaps the hill on which the Church was built later, the most notable area in the place). His name, Wotuc or Witoc, included the syllable -oc ; this in Anglo-Saxon was a diminutive ; it still survives in hill-ock (a little hill) and words of that type. (Man-ik-in is an example of the way in which *double* diminutives occur ; the "man" is made smaller twice. We also have words like part-ic-le, literally a little-little-part). So we can be fairly certain that our first Saxon settler was "little Wit or Wot" who chose the Heath as his home.

About 200 years after Domesday Book, the Heath was still a prominent part of the District ; I have (through the kindness of Mr. John Richards), a copy of a deed by which Robert de Ferrars, the last of that family to be Earl of Derby, granted some land at "Heath Spot" to one Adam Hunter (perhaps one of the Ferrars' household or a "retainer"). The "Heath Spot" is mentioned in later documents up to 1629, but the name seems to have fallen into disuse and I have never heard it used.

Prof. Skeat, the great authority on Anglo-Saxon, gives two related meanings — a small piece of ground, and a place marked by damp. There are one or two places on the Heath to which both meanings could be applied. The plot of land mentioned in Robert de Ferrars' deed is stated to lie by the road to Tean. This must refer to the road from the bottom of Dollis Hill to the "Three Tuns", or, if as appears likely, the Heath about 1266 reached farther to the north end, it could be the Ashbourne Road beyond the "Three Tuns". (There was no "New Road" leading towards Tean until about 1815).

The Duchy of Lancaster survey of 1629 mentions that there were then signs of a previous house standing near the end of the New Road area, and that signs could be traced also of a moat ; this fits in with Prof. Skeat's explanation that "Spot" could mean a wettish piece of ground.

It is curious that one of the many forms which Redfern found, Wittokshather, could have given him the correct Anglo-Saxon derivation. But we have also to remember that some antiquarians, who contributed to various periodicals available to Redfern, were prone to assume that because Celtic tribes did indeed once inhabit the Midlands, they must have had settlements almost everywhere ; and it was too readily assumed that the Celtic priests or Druids were responsible for many places and customs which had actually been established by prehistoric men in Neolithic and Bronze age times. The main Celtic tribes did not reach these islands from ancient Gaul until about 400 B.C., long after the Neolithic and Bronze age men, some of whom were accustomed to put "Beakors" in graves, and are now referred to as "Beakor" folk. There are no traces of Beakor Folk in Uttoxeter itself. For example, the stone circles found in N. Derbyshire and such places as Stonehenge were built by Neolithic and early Bronze age men, long before the Celts with their Druid priests came to these islands from what is now Modern France and Belgium. (Recent aerial photography has revealed a wooden-post circle near Stonehenge, this is now called Wood-henge ; it may have been a prototype for Stonehenge. There are no less than sixty "henges" now identified in Great Britain.

The Celtic tribes who succeeded the late Neolithic and Bronze Age inhabitants were only sparsely scattered in the Midlands. Burial Mounds of late Neolithic and Bronze Age men are not at all rare ; their early burials were by inhumation (i.e. corpses buried as such) in "long" barrows, with burial chambers of wood, turf, or stone. Personal weapons, decorations such as necklaces, torques, etc. have all been found in them. But no barrows of this kind have been found in the Uttoxeter area, the nearest being at Swinscoe on the Derbyshire border. Towards the end of the Bronze Age burial customs changed and often cremation took the place of inhumation ; the burial mounds of this period are usually round and contain charcoal ashes and cinerary urns. Redfern explored the round barrow above Uttoxeter High Wood, finding a layer of charcoal and some fragments of pottery of doubtful age. Redfern's conjecture that the tumulus could be co-eval with the Pyramids is, one fears, rather wishful thinking, for some of the Egyptian buildings date back to 4,000 B.C. whereas the probable age of the High Wood barrow is later than 1,000 B.C. The methods used by antiquarians before and during Redfern's time tended to destroy much evidence ; modern archaeologists use small trowels and even brushes, whereas the earlier searchers (including Redfern himself when exploring Mounds at Toothill on the High Wood, at Lower Tean and elsewhere) used pick and spade. Celtic

tribes, and later Roman and Saxon men, often took over the old burial places, and it is only by examining weapons, pottery, brooches and similar decorative artifacts found in the barrows that any reliable statement can be made. Articles and weapons accidentally lost by wanderers are still occasionally reported, and modern excavations for gravel, especially in raised terraces in the Trent Valley, have provided such remains as well as those of both wild and domesticated animals.

The effects of the advancing and retreating of the ice-caps on at least four periods from about 600,000 years ago to about 25,000 years ago, can be traced in geological formations, and the inter-glacial periods provide remains of vegetation and animal life, both of temperate and semi-tropical kinds. Redfern knew something of the ice-ages, and gives examples of remains in this district, the most notable of these being a mammoth skeleton found when a deep well was being sunk through marl at Birch Cross ; only one large tusk over 4 feet in length was brought to the surface.

Redfern mentions also the discovery, during excavations for building, drainage etc. of animal remains, horns, skulls, bones and so on ; he illustrated these on page 24 and gave pictures of stone weapons, both crude and polished, flint scrapers and arrowheads. Most of these occur as obvious losses when hunters roved over the land ; others were left in gravel or alluvial levels by flooding and even by glacial action. He collected a number of "celts", i.e. implements for cutting or scraping, found in places scattered about the district, both in stone and bronze. Illustrations of such are given on p.p. 41 - 46. The word "celt" in this connection is not the same as "Celt" the name of the immigrant tribes from Gaul, and the flint, stone and bronze objects called celts were used long before Celtic tribes reached the shores of Britain about 500 B.C.

Redfern's description of the geological features of the Uttoxeter area is not expressed in present day terms but, with one exception noted below, was not wholly incorrect. He says (on page 20, 2nd edn.) that "Uttoxeter is situated upon the "drift" formation, which belongs to the upper tertiary epoch, and immediately beneath the materials of the alluvium". In modern geological terms this would be "Uttoxeter is situated on rocks of Triassic age, the superficial debris being the glacial and fluvial drift of Quaternary and Recent Age respectively". Redfern went on to ascribe the accumulations of boulders, clay, gravel etc. to "a strong current when most of Europe was submerged beneath the sea". Modern geology ascribes these to deposition of drift with boulders by continental ice-sheets (as in Greenland today), and the debris left after the ice-sheets melted away. The sand, gravel and clay deposits and their economic importance in later times will be dealt with in future chapters.

Many of the tracks found even today along the ridges overlooking valleys were rightly noted by Redfern as prehistoric or later paths used for travelling from place to place, often to obtain salt ; it may be significant that the barrow mound at the High Wood was placed close to the hill track.

Following his illustrations of the various celts, Redfern went on to state his belief that these discoveries attest the early and long settlement of the Britons in the vicinity of Uttoxeter. This cannot be wholly accepted ; the ancient Britons — i.e. Celtic folk — came as we have seen from what is now modern France and Belgium and they were not here during the Stone and Bronze Ages. Their settlements were most numerous in the south ; they had ploughs and other implements, and even before coming here they had grown corn in Gaul. They were usually associated in clans under one chief, and in this part of the Midlands, Ptolemy, writing in A.D. 120, i.e. about 80 years after the Romans had mastered the Britons, named the British tribe which held this area as the Cornavii. Redfern quoted this, but unfortunately did not visualise that the population was only sparse ; the district as a whole was not really under settled cultivation, and hence we have only few certain evidences of ancient British life. It is notable also that the Romans, having conquered southern Britain A.D. 42, marched S.W. towards Somerset, N.W. to Chester via Shrewsbury, and N. to Lincoln and York. Staffordshire, with its hilly regions in the north and south, and its woodlands elsewhere, had no attraction for them. The great Roman road known as Watling Street on its route from London to Shrewsbury and Chester, only just touched this region ; Icknield Way, the other great road from Little Chester (Derby) passed through Burton to Lichfield and Wall ; during the last two centuries of 400 years of Roman domination another route led from Little Chester via Rocester and Chesterton to Chester. The Antonine Itinerary (a map of the Roman routes and stations about the 3rd and 4th centuries) mentions Mediolanum (about the position of Chesterton) but shows no station at Uttoxeter.

We have also to record that in our county the remains of only one Roman Villa are known (a residence with ancillary buildings) and that in west Staffordshire. Pottery dug up around Uttoxeter, thought by Redfern to be Samian ware (red pottery found throughout the Roman Empire) has been shown by experts of the N. Staffs. Field Club to be Medieval. Similarly, experts have found that some roads attributed to the Romans, e.g. Via Devana, supposed to lead to Deva (Roman name for Chester), never existed except in the imagination of antiquarians. It is now considered that there is no evidence of any Roman road passing from Burton through Needwood Forest and Uttoxeter towards Stoke.

It has also been assumed that such words as Portway are evidence of Roman occupation, and three places in Uttoxeter, near Sudbury and near Tutbury, do in fact have that name. Yet the word applied to the Sudbury road junction was never on record until about 1,200 A.D., and the same is true of the Uttoxeter name.

It may appear to some readers that these facts will tend to detract somewhat from Redfern's work ; actually in his day there were many antiquarians whose conclusions have proved unreliable ; on page 48 (2nd Edition) of his book, Redfern himself pointed out errors made by such writers as Erdeswick, Camden, and others. One attempt in particular to identify Uttoxeter with Etocetum (Wall) near Lichfield was mentioned. Etocetum was a station on Watling Street and is marked in the Antonine Itinerary mentioned above ; Redfern quite rightly rejected this theory, but still held to his own idea that Uttoxeter was a Roman station. As we have seen, there is every reason for regarding the Saxon settlements on the Heath as the real beginning. It is just possible that the Roman garrison at Rocester in the later years of the Roman occupation, were accustomed to guard their south-western approaches by an outpost on the hill overlooking the Dove Marshes ; there is some evidence from recent excavating that this hill had two ridges on its summit ; it was clearly an eminent position for the first church foundation there, though the date of such a church is not known.

If, at any time, the Rocester station had reason to communicate with Etocetum, Redfern's suggestion of a track from Rocester through Uttoxeter Heath and onwards in a south-westerly direction, is probably correct ; but no Roman remains have actually been found on this route. As we have noted, the pottery and other remains which Redfern found to the north of Bradley Street have been pronounced as Mediaeval by the North Staffs. Field Club (Vol. 4 Field Studies — 1964).

On page 53 (2nd Edition) Redfern identified what he termed Rykeneld Street with the Via Devana. We have already noted that the latter road is not known to have existed, and the Roman Icknield Street (also called Ryknield Street) followed what is now the main road from Derby through Burton to Lichfield and Wall. Though Redfern had no opportunity of checking the legendary nature of these supposed Roman links (Portway etc.) it is a fact that the first known mention of The Portway (on what is now A.50 road junction by Sudbury Park), occurs in documents of 1286 A.D. ; and Ryknield Street is first mentioned as late as 1400 A.D. as a track leading from St. David's in Wales, via Worcester and Birmingham to York.

No mention of this imagined Roman road is found in Domesday Book but there is some evidence of a road from York to Worcester, via Derby. But Redfern was correct in tracing an old track from Uttoxeter via Slade Lane (Redfern gives "narrow" for the Anglo-Saxon word Slaed or Slade, but the word really meant "valley" or "dell") and Stramshall towards Madeley Holme, and it seems that he was almost certainly correct in stating that the hill at Madeley, now shown as Toot Hill on the Ordnance Survey Map, had prehistoric connections. We shall see later that in the Domesday Book report of Madeley a fairly large Saxon settlement was recorded. Some recent archaeologists have considered that excavations were made in this area for copper ore, and this seems to indicate a Bronze Age occupation.

Probably the main reason for errors in Victorian antiquarian writing is the tendency to regard conditions in remote prehistoric times as being similar to those of the 19th century. The earliest inhabitants of these islands seldom stayed very long in any locality. Where food could be obtained Palaeolithic communities stayed, but sooner or later had to move on ; later Neolithic and Bronze Age men tended to settle longer, as they possessed better tools to facilitate hunting, fishing, and primitive cultivation of land where open flattish stretches could be found. Such settled places occurred mainly in the South, and in the harsher conditions of the North Midlands progress was much slower. So we are unlikely to find extensive signs of population ; indeed, as may be expected, it is only along the great river valleys that many remains can be found, with some hill fortresses mainly of the later Iron Age, only a century or two prior to the Celtic immigrations from the continent.

Even when these Celtic men arrived, they spread only very slowly Northwards, and their clans naturally avoided areas where food was less easily obtainable, or where the work of clearing was difficult. Hence, traces even of Celtic settlement are not as common in this district as the Victorian antiquaries often thought. There was also a temptation to think that they had actually found something about which they had read. There was certainly no Druid temple where the Dearndale (a purely Saxon name) is found.

Some of the tracks are very old, even prehistoric, but many are much more recent. The waggon roads to the mills on Tean Brook can still be traced in the Spath district.

Moreover, the Portway, mentioned so often by Redfern as proving Roman settlement, is the common name found all over England for roads leading to places of *trade*.

There were once three mills between Uttoxeter and Stramshall ; the first being the corn-mill now known as "Titley's" Mill ; the second at Bangalore near to the place where Tean Brook divides into two streams, and the third still lower down and now a farm house, the former "Cotton Mill". The approaches to the last two named were altered when the railway was constructed, but the tracks leading to this area from Spath can still be traced, and were used by cotton trade waggons passing by Leek to Macclesfield and Manchester in the 18th and early 19th centuries.

Only one of these led to Stramshall, and eventually by cart-tracks to Madeley as we have seen above. But there is no evidence of any Roman remains, and certainly not of what Redfern thought to be several Roman stations between Uttoxeter and Stramshall. There is nowhere in Western Europe any example of such closely sited Roman stations, but in Redfern's day many antiquarians, as we have seen, were only too inclined to believe that they had found remains similar to those about which they had read, but which were very much fewer, especially in the N. Midlands, then they thought.

Later we shall see that Saxon settlers made Madeley quite an important place, held in 1086 by no less a person than Lady Godiva.

On page 55 (2nd edn.), Redfern mentions that in an old survey he had found frequent mention of the Botham Field, the Bromshulfe Field, and the Maiden Field. (The last-named only occurs occasionally). These names are references to a much later medieval system of land cultivation, known as the "Three Field" system. By this system, one "field"—quite a large area—was left "fallow" every third year, the other two being devoted to corn and hay. The fields were divided into long strips, and after a town's meeting, were divided among the townsfolk in such a way that each man had a share in both fertile and less valuable areas. The Lord of the Manor had the lion's share of the produce, and the peasants were required to take part in cultivation and harvesting, while the tithes (10th part due to the church), were stored in the large tithe barns. The site of the Uttoxeter tithe barn was next to the old Grammar School ground down Bridge Street, now part of Messrs. Bamfords Works. The piece of land adjoining the School ground was for many years called "Parson's Yard". (The word Tythe Barn has survived in the name of the southern part of Alton). But all this was centuries later than any Celtic, Roman or Anglo-Saxon times. Redfern correctly traced the old track from Uttoxeter to Madeley, via Stramshall and part of Hollington Lane, but he was on more doubtful ground when he quoted references

to the "Portway", interpreting this name as evidence of Roman occupation. He quotes the same name as applied to the narrow entrance of the alley opposite Lloyds Bank in Carter Street, and refers to the same word given to the road junction on the Western side of Sudbury.

The Duchy of Lancaster survey of 1629 gives the six records of fields alongside the Portway, which Redfern thought had been recorded by Peter Lightfoot in 1658 ; the Lancaster document also records : "The Portwaye or Salter's Lane is in divers small men's hands — Thomas Warner's in the Tarhole 27 perches, John Fauldring in his close 1 rood 27 perches, Richard Middleton 1 rood, Mr. Kynnersley 35 perches, Mr. Harte 25 perches, Edward Chamberlain, Robert Gynkes, John Gratwich, Thomas Dingill and Mr. Mynors in one close amongst them in the Botham 2 roods, William Gray and Richard Startyn 1 rood, Richard Middleton hath 2 roods between 2 closes, Edward Fynnemore into the Broad Meadow 1 rood 30 perches. All the Portway is 3 acres and 4 perches. The rent hath not been paid of late years". All this quotation is in the survey book used by Redfern, but he seems to have missed it, or considered it unimportant.

But there is no evidence that the name Portway near Sudbury was in use until long after the Norman Conquest, indeed, as we have noted already, until 1286.

Another explanation which he gives (on page 58 of the 2nd edn.), of Portway as being the "principal" way "through the Kingdom to Ireland" is another example of the rather fanciful interpretations common to the Victorian antiquarians. If there was a way leading to Ireland, which is doubtful, in the 400 years of Roman rule, it was obviously the Watling Street, now the A5. At the present day this leads to Holyhead, but Chester was the Roman terminus long ago, and later became the main port of the west since it had been conquered by the Angles of Northumbria in 615 A.D.

Redfern's explanation that the Uttoxeter track was called Portway because Port was a *Tentonic* word meaning "principal" or "chief" must also be regarded as fanciful — words now described as Tentonic came here mainly through the Anglo-Saxons, Jutes, Danes, and Norsemen much later than the Roman rule in Britain.

From Page 60 onwards, Redfern describes his searches around Madeley, and it now seems that some of his conjectures were correct, though not always for the reasons given. Thus Toot-hill, now marked on the ordnance survey map, like the Toothill along the so-called back way to Marchington, was not a place of pagan worship of Tent, but another lookout post, and there seems little evidence of any Roman settlement. However, as we have noted, the various irregular surfaces

in many of the fields have been considered as Bronze Age excavations in search of copper ore. The road tracks and foundations of buildings which Redfern excavated, seem most likely to have been the remains of Saxon occupation ; for, as already stated, the Saxon settlement recorded in 1086 in Domesday Book, shows that there was a place of considerable size, with no less than 27 men who worked on the land (villeins and bordars with 5 serfs).

Redfern next described various discoveries of the genuine Roman station at Rocester, which we shall include in a later chapter referring to that place. Here it will be sufficient to remind readers that the Roman rule over Britain continued for four centuries, i.e. about the same time as that which separates the reigns of our two Queen Elizabeths. It is now recognised that the Roman station at Rocester was fortified after at least two centuries of the first conquest.

It is interesting to note an omission of another period of the story of these islands — what is now termed the “Iron Age”. We have seen that Redfern collected and wrote about many evidences of pre-historic inhabitants down to the end of the Neolithic and Bronze Ages.

But the land was later invaded, especially in the south, by men from the continent who had learned to produce and use iron. This period was only a short time before the arrival of Celtic tribes from what is now Belgium and Flanders, soon to be followed by Julius Caesar’s reconnaissance of 55 B.C.

The iron age man occupied this land in the 6th and 5th centuries B.C. They were the builders of such hill-fortresses as Maiden Castle in Dorset ; other iron age forts are found in Yorkshire and even in Scotland, but the nearest places to Uttoxeter where there are relics of this period seem to be around Burton-on-Trent, at Walton, Breedon-on-the-Hill, and possibly at Tutbury. The iron-age men with their new ploughs chose river valleys for cultivation, and kept cattle and sheep. They seem to have found it necessary to build forts on the surrounding hills, and use fortified terraces and deep ditches to guard their stores, flocks, herds, and their families.

Their smelting work is probably the source of various legendary figures, such as Wayland the Smith, and the Beltane Fires (though this has been blended with earlier pagan rites). Two iron bars were actually found when “Wayland’s Smithy”, a long barrow in Berkshire, was excavated in 1919 ; it has been assumed that these were really iron currency bars. It was once thought that the pagan fires lighted on May Day at Blencathra (or Saddleback) near Keswick were based on ancient British legends, and the custom has not died out.

Up to at least 100 B.C. there were continual immigrations from the continent of Celtic men, and it was their connection

with the tribes of Northern Gaul which led to Julius Caesar's expedition of 55 B.C.

As noted above, Redfern seems to have had in his anti-quarian reading no opportunity of learning about these repeated migrations of Celtic people into this land ; nor did he learn of the varying density of population in different areas.

In his account of the Roman period he omitted any reference to the search which they made, especially in the limestone hills of N. Derbyshire and in a few places in N.E. Staffordshire, for lead ; pigs of lead have been found in Derbyshire stamped with Roman Emperors' names, but there are naturally no traces of this in the Uttoxeter district. It is clear that the Romans were more interested in the Watling Street part of Staffordshire, especially during their conquest of the Britons about 43 A.D., and their other march of conquest from Kent to York did not affect our county.

But it would be wrong to imagine that there was an extermination of the Celtic people, even after the great defeat of the Druid power by the legions in A.D. 61 in Anglesey. From that time the chief Celtic Centre was in Ireland, where legends and history became rather confused. In Britain as the years of Roman occupation went on, the Britons were retained in fairly large numbers as slaves. Towards the middle and last periods of Roman rule, the British were not altogether ill-treated ; in some parts of Britain Roman noblemen made large estates after the pattern of Italy, with farm settlements, luxurious houses and baths. In some cases Roman leaders allied themselves by marriage with the families of British chieftains, and many of the "Roman" villas were owned by wealthy men of Romano-British blood. There is little doubt also that many of the legionaries followed the example of their officers, so that by the end of 400 years the inhabitants of the farm estates were of mixed race. It is significant, however, from the point of view of Uttoxeter history, that no traces of such "villas" are to be found in this area — in fact the remains of only one such Roman house occur in West Staffordshire at Hales, though in some districts of the southern half of Britain they were quite numerous. Moreover, some villa settlements included craftsmen as well as ordinary labourers, and so made the nuclei of small towns.

We thus have in Staffordshire Roman stations recorded in the Antonine Itinerary of the third century A.D.

Such are Letocetum (Wall near Lichfield) and Uriconium (Wroxeter) along Watling Street, just over the Shropshire border. There was also the minor road from Little Chester (Derby) via Rocester and Mediolanum (Chesterton near Newcastle-under-Lyme) to Chester. We can also trace the line of the Icknield Way from Wall through Burton-on-Trent

towards Lincoln and York. But apart from these, Roman remains such as odd coins and weapons must be considered as accidental losses. The Northern highlands of Staffordshire, the eastern Dove valley, and the hilly woodlands towards the South evidently were not considered by the Romans, passing to other areas, to be worth occupying and cultivating. Hence the few Roman remains anywhere around Uttoxeter except at Rocester. An account of Rocester, through the kind assistance of J. Critchlow, Esq., will be included in a later Chapter. Redfern gave a short account of several places near Uttoxeter, but the story of Roman remains at Rocester can now be brought up to date.

Before passing to Anglo-Saxon times it may be noted here that Redfern (and other antiquarians of his time) occasionally mistook sunken tracks for Roman roads. In some cases this is correct, but he quotes on page 79 (2nd edition) a petition to Parliament made in 1772 for the improvement of the Uttoxeter - Stafford road ; Redfern considered that the track (discernible even now) running by the Loxley Park Wall was a sunken Roman road. But it is highly probable (though I have not been able to find documentary evidence) that the present road alongside the Park Wall was the result of the petition mentioned above. The Squire of Loxley in 1811, Thomas Sneyd-Kynnersley, built this wall and had his initials, the date, and the name "Loxley Park" built into the red-brick wall by means of blue bricks ; and almost certainly avoided the previous winding way in the new road. The blue brick parts are still visible.

We now pass to the Anglo-Saxon history of the district ; we have already noted that the pagan invaders from across the North Sea first savagely overcame the British and Romano-British who had been left undefended. There was plenty of booty for these warriors, but they had other plans than mere robbery. Their native homes around what is modern Schleswig-Holstein, Jutland, and the Frisian lands in N.E. Holland, were under great pressure from Teutonic tribes thrusting Westwards from the Baltic region. So when the Anglo-Saxons found a comparatively undefended land they were not slow to plan settling there. The rivers penetrating to the centre of Britain made excellent means of transport for a sea-faring folk. Hence the Humber, the Trent and Yorkshire Ouse basins were gradually settled, and the rivers of the Wash, the Thames and the Severn to the west allowed more Saxons to find the lands they needed ; for these settlers were not only sailors but farmers as well, and the alluvial levels of the great river valleys provided exactly what the farmer-warriors needed, for they were experienced cattle men.

We owe many modern English characteristics to these ancestors of ours. A farmer had his own little settlement

and individual land and herds ; he was, however, not wholly isolated, for each district or township held periodic group meetings to decide matters of public interest. When, some years later, the land was divided into shires, these shires were divided into "hundreds", and there were "hundred-moots" (meetings) on similar lines to the town-moots.

Uttoxeter was in the Totmonslow hundred of Staffordshire, though Totmonslow is now only a very small hamlet. Chosen men from each hundred met in Shire-moots, under the shire-reeve, i.e. Sheriff.

It may also be remembered that although the names of most rivers and mountains are Celtic in origin, this is, in part at least, due to the persistence of the names used by such Britons as were kept as slaves by the conquering English. Redfern was hardly correct in deriving most river names from Anglo-Saxon words. Thames, Tame, Tamar, and Tain (Tyne and Tean), are all Celtic river names, and Ben and Pen are Celtic hill names. On the other hand, most settlements and homesteads were named by the Anglo-Saxons as they were set up. In the valley of the Dove (a Celtic name, akin to "dubh"—dark) we find Norbury (the north borough) and Sudbury (the south borough), Leigh (from the Anglo-Saxon word leagh, a meadow, which gives us so many of our village and farm names, such as Agardsley, Checkley, Bromley and so on. Other Saxon rural names end in -hurst, i.e. woodland ; for example, Burndhurst by the river Blythe is the "burnt forest", and a field-name near Dagdale, pronounced "Feeny-ost" is really the "Ferny-hurst", i.e. a former woodland where bracken still grows. The N.E. Midlands too, have many -thorpe endings, e.g. Countesthorpe in Leicestershire (once owned by Thomas Alleyne, founder of the Uttoxeter Grammar School), from the Saxon -thorpe, i.e. village. So, too, a family group made a -ham (home) where e.g. the Nottings settled ; so with Rotherham and a host of other places. The ending -ton to a name, e.g. Laxton, Burton, etc. shows the beginning of a Saxon town ; and there are several farms in the Uttoxeter area — Deggs' Leasow, Gibbs' Leasow, and the Leasows near Tean Brook before it joins the Dove. All these are derived from the Anglo-Saxon word for Meadow. We also have the farm across the river from Doveridge — now called Marriage Holme, which is really the Marisch (Marshy) holm, an island or piece of land above river level ; nearly related modern names are found in Stockholm, Bornholm abroad, and Skokholm Island off the Pembroke coast.

Redfern (page 81 onwards in 2nd edition) stated that many Saxon villages originated after the invasion, but evidently thought they were founded on older Roman stations. As we have seen in previous pages, this cannot be accepted ; whereas this district was very sparsely inhabited in Roman times, the

Saxon settlements, though at first small or even single home-steads on riverside plots, soon spread along the valleys of the Trent and its tributaries, and, as Redfern notes (on page 87) the district became Saxon even if the hamlets were small. Some of the examples given by Redfern are rather fanciful, e.g. his quotation from the "Gentlemen's Magazine" giving "holme" as the Saxon word for "holly"; the correct meaning has already been given; "holly" is derived from Anglo-Saxon holegn.

Redfern tends to confuse the story of Saxon settlement beginning on page 81 by an account of Dove Bridge, and quotes a 17th century document showing that the upkeep of this bridge was to be provided by money arising from the profits of the Broad Meadow and the Netherwood. This document also refers to the residents within the "Lordship of the burrow town of Uttoeseter". All this of course refers to centuries after the Anglo-Saxon invasions and settlements. Redfern is again rather fanciful in thinking that the early Saxons indulged in Bear Baiting, and refers to an old Harleian manuscript which mentions this. An illustration in the Encyclopaedia Britannica does indeed show a group of men, dressed apparently about the time of the early Norman period, setting dogs at a chained bear and beating it with sticks. But the early English warrior-farmers had to fight their way to their new homes, and even when the Britons were driven westwards we shall see that fighting between the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms went on for several centuries. Although some wild bears were still to be found in this country until Norman times, it is very unlikely that such a small township as Uttoxeter must have been in Saxon times, could have afforded either the time or expense of keeping bears for baiting until during or after the Norman conquest.

If Redfern has ascribed bear and bull-baiting to the Middle Ages and up to the Stuart period he would have been correct. Bull baiting or running was kept up in Tutbury and Uttoxeter, as Redfern correctly says, until the early 19th century.

It took the Saxons from about 449 A.D. to 580 A.D. before the Britons were overcome, retreating into what is now Cornwall, Wales, and the land from the N.W. Midlands as far as the Lake District and the Clyde, a district known as Strathclyde.

The stiff resistance of these Britons owed something, at least, to inspiring leadership, and it is from this period that the legends of King Arthur and his round-table Knights arose; legends, however, which were later given a more mediaeval turn by Welsh and Irish bards, and by French tales of chivalry and mystery. A number of sites have been regarded as the capital fortress of this legendary king, usually

in Cornwall and Wales — Camelot, Caerlerns, Tintagel — but some modern historians and archaeologists believe that it was Celtic power in Wales and to the North in Strathclyde which held up the westward progress of the Anglo-Saxons.

During the later years of Roman occupation, Christianity reached Britain and spread to most of the Celtic folk of Ireland and Wales. The English invaders worshipped the Teutonic Gods — Odin (or Woden), Thor, etc., and the Celtic resistance was strengthened by their religious hatred for the pagan invaders.

Eventually the only Celtic kingdoms to remain as opponents of the Anglo-Saxons were Wales and Strathclyde. The English conquerors had by the year 584 established the local kingdoms of Northumbria, reaching from the Humber to the Forth ; Mercia, covering the land from the Welsh Marches, i.e. borders whence the name Mercia), to East Anglia and southwards to the Thames ; Wessex, consisting of the channel coast, shires from Devon to Kent and Northwards to the Thames Valley. These three powerful kingdoms resulted from the conquest of their neighbouring kinsfolk (who had at one time formed seven small kingdoms). This struggle between Anglo-Saxon kingdoms continued with varying fortune for about 150 years ; in turn Northumbria, next Mercia, and finally Wessex became supreme under King Ecgberht in 828, and England was in fact at last the Kingdom of the English, and since the restoration of Christianity begun by St. Augustine in Kent in 589, and ended by Celtic missionaries from Ireland and Scotland, most of the English had given up, at least nominally, their heathen gods. This had not come about without a struggle, and the Uttoxeter district had been in the midst of the resistance to Christianity by Penda the great Mercian ruler, who was killed in 655 when attacking the Christian Kingdom of Northumbria. It is worth noting as of local interest, that St. Chad, who had worked with St. Aidan in Northumbria, came to Lichfield as its first Bishop in 669, for after the great heathen King Penda had perished at Winwaed fighting against the men of Northumbria, Mercia, under Penda's Christian son no longer remained as the champion of paganism.

We still have reminders of the Saxon gods in the names of Wednesbury and Wednesfield in South Staffordshire ; and St. Chad's name has been given to many places in the diocese, e.g. Chatwell, Chadsmoor.

A later Mercian King, Offa, who reigned from 758 - 796, had to struggle against Wessex as well as against the Welsh ; his famous earthwork, Offa's Dyke, still shows that the kingdom of Mercia (the mark or boundary between Welsh and Saxons) was well named.

The effect of these years of warfare on Saxons whose parents and grandparents had chosen the Uttoxeter area must have been that progress in settlement, cultivation and building was difficult and slow. Common dangers, however, must have made the owners of the homesteads, already accustomed to live independently, more ready to work with neighbouring hamlets. When need arose, the Saxon towns and hundreds were all the more closely knit.

However, not long after Egbert of Wessex had united all the Saxon kingdoms, his grandson Alfred had to withstand a threat to his land greater than any previous invasion. Across the North Sea came hordes of piratical Norsemen, known generally as Danes. Though Alfred saved the South and West from destruction, the Danes eventually settled in the North-East and in the North and East Midlands.

The Uttoxeter area must again have suffered grievously, and it took the years between 878, when Alfred made peace with the Danes, and 1086 when the Domesday Book survey was made, for the Dove Valley settlements to rise even to moderate numbers.

We can recognise the Danish places by the termination - by ; thus Grimsby, Whitby, Derby, and most towns in the N.E. Midland and N.E. coast have this ending — the Danish word for “town”.

We have given this short account of nearly 600 years of history to show how the true England finally emerged, but chiefly because it helps us to understand the reasons for the scanty population in our own district in 1086 when William the Conqueror ordered the Domesday survey to be made. Redfern omitted the greater part of Anglo-Saxon history from A.D. 449 to 1066.

To return to the first Anglo-Saxon arrivals in Britain, we note again that the rivers were most useful to the invaders. How long it took for the Staffordshire part of the Trent valley to be settled, or for the valleys of the tributaries to be reached, we can only conjecture. We do know, however, that after the Celtic men (or Welsh as they came to be called) had been driven westwards, some Anglo-Saxons were able to use the sites of Roman centres such as York, Lincoln, Leicester, and later, Chester. The only place of this kind in our district was, of course, Rocester, and that, as we have seen, was never a large Roman town, and was probably founded some time after the Roman conquest of the Britons. Redfern thought that most Saxon towns were really Roman, taken over by the invaders. Some Saxons certainly occupied the site of Rocester, which had possibly been looted if not partially destroyed when the Romans departed ; yet by 1086 its annual

value was the same as that of Uttoxeter, which was probably not settled until about 600 A.D.

The actual beginning of Wotochesede can only be conjectured. What did the people in the first few boatloads see as they came up the River Dove? Some flat alluvial land, which these experienced farmers considered to be just what they were seeking. One family at least came to the moderate stretch of moorland heath with a small stream, which they thought suitable for settlement. To the south was a hill (the site of Uttoxeter Church) overlooking the marshes with their dwarf willows; here they may have found some traces of a Roman lookout post, and to the west of this a small open space (now the Market Place), with a spring of water.

It seems highly probable that they had neighbouring families who had chosen their own dwelling sites wherever the land could support their cattle, and where woodlands close at hand promised shelter and food for swine as well as wood for firing. No doubt some of these families had been neighbours or relations in their old homeland across the North Sea.

So our local area came to be known as Wotoc's Heath, but until 1086 we have no real records of the settlement.

What we do know is that as the first Saxons and Jutes reached Kent about 449 A.D. there could have been few Anglo-Saxons here until many years later, when the invaders had out-fought the Romano-Celtic folk and (except where a Roman place survived) had been able to form their own small communities.

We may conjecture that, as the south of England did not finally become Saxon until 526 and as the Angles of the north-eastern region only formed a kingdom in 547, there must have been few, if any, midland Anglo-Saxon settlements until at least 600. St. Augustine had brought Christianity to Kent in 597, and St. Chad became the first Bishop of Lichfield in 664. But as early as 568 there were civil wars between the Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms though many Britons still remained in possession of some west midland and south-western areas.

In 607 we find that the A.S. Chronicle records not only fighting between the men of Sussex and those of Essex, but the Angles from Northumbria marched westwards to Chester and won a great victory over the Welsh. We may be certain that the early Midland Anglo-Saxons must have experienced difficult times, and could only have established farms (which was their aim) after being over-run by belligerents from several directions. Still, by 626 there was a Midland Anglo-Saxon Kingdom (Mercia), under the famous King Penda.

His rule is said to have covered 30 years, and despite many campaigns against his own Saxon rivals and the Welsh, it seems probable that the first Saxon riverside farms had been formed by that time and that Penda had sufficient Saxon settlers to raise armies from time to time. We have already noted that the pioneers, though somewhat isolated, were ready in time of need to join with their neighbours at the call of the ealdorman who dominated that district.

We have also to remember that the fighting, whether against the stubborn Welsh trying to prevent Saxon advances westward, or against other Anglo-Saxons for domination of the new "Kingdoms", must have been costly in casualties. Severely wounded men of those times could not have had a very high chances of recovery, and hand-to-hand fighting must have caused the deaths of many wounded men in addition to those slain outright. Such losses did not allow a rapid growth in population, especially in districts such as the Dove valley, which must have suffered more because it was situated in the direct path of the various moving armies. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle also records heavy losses caused by cattle disease in 897.

There was a short period of comparative peace after King Alfred and the Danes made the treaty of Wedmore in 878. By this all the land to the N.E. of Watling Street was allowed to become the Danelagh or Danelaw, and before long the Norsemen, who were not so very far removed from the Saxons in language and customs, formed their own settlements and farmed the land. We can recognise them by the termination "-by".

We read in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle also of the Lady of Mercia, who made Tamworth her headquarters and rescued much of the Mercian territory from Danish rule.

This daughter of Alfred, with Edward her brother, known as Edward the Elder, succeeded for some years at least, in bringing to England the orderly time which Alfred had begun.

It was under Edward's rule that the shire boundaries were fixed, and although before long the Danes again broke the peace, aided by further Norse invasions, the shire divisions with their hundreds remained much as they are now.

Again we have to note that the Trent and Dove Valleys were in the midst of the wars, and there is no doubt that many of the legends of skirmishes have some foundation of truth; moreover, burial places and weapons may well mark such spots.

Here it is interesting to note that Redfern, following a legendary account of a battle on the site of Alton Towers by "Brompton, the Abbot of Jourvall", states that Ine (or Ina)

King of Wessex invaded Mercia in 716, and was defeated at Bonebury by Ceolred. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, however, under the year 715, gives an opposite story ; the battle between Ceolred and Ine was fought at Wanborough in Wiltshire, and the invader was Ceolred, who was trying to bring Wessex into subjection. This is noted in J. R. Green's "Short History of the English People", where the account is that "Ceolred took up the strife with Wessex for the overlordship of the South, and in 715 marched into the very heart of Wessex, but he was repulsed in a bloody encounter at Wanborough".

This story has more authority behind it than Brompton's, but it would be interesting to discover why a high rock overlooking the Churnet just below Alton Towers has become known as "Ina's rock". Ina was not mainly a warlike man ; he was the first Wessex King to draw up a code of laws to enforce justice, and he founded the famous Monastery of Glastonbury. Later, he gave up his throne, disgusted with the civil strife which was doing harm to England. In 726 he retired to Rome, and died there.

The Uttoxeter district, as we have seen, could hardly be termed "flourishing" after these disturbed times, but even worse incursions of the Danes followed, and, strangely enough, better conditions for the farmer settlers all over England only came when all the sub-kingdoms acknowledged Canute, King of the Danes, as their overlord in 1027, and actually paid him £270,000 tribute the next year.

In the previous fighting from 1016 - 1026 Canute, who at that period had not abandoned his piracy, twice passed through Mercia ; and the Northumbrian Earls, after getting an army ostensibly against Canute, went into Staffordshire and "they plundered on their parts and Canute on his". (*From the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle 1016*). Again we note the ill-effects which must have fallen on the Mercian farm settlements.

After Canute's death in 1035, Mercia remained one of the four earldoms (Wessex, East Anglia, and Northumbria were the others), and many religious houses retained the privileges and lands which the once savage Dane had given them. The time of peace must have been appreciated by the Mercian valley farmers, but under Canute's two sons bloodshed again threatened for seven years until 1042 when the whole nation welcomed the accession of Edward (the Confessor), a descendant of the royal Saxon family of Alfred the Great. England then enjoyed 24 years of comparative peace, and we can imagine the effect on Mercian men, both Saxon and Dane in origin, but now working on the land with less disturbance. In places, too, well-built churches began to appear, Westminster Abbey itself being one.

The local government of the Shires, hundreds, and townships, had time to consolidate ; even those districts like our own, which had led a most precarious existence.

It was upon this state of affairs that the Norman invasion came in 1066 ; King Harold's repulse of a Norse landing in Yorkshire was negatived by William's landing in Sussex, and the story of Hastings, or Senlac, is well-known.

Two years later, when the North and West revolted against William, in the words of the historian J. R. Green — “Town and village were harried and burnt, their inhabitants slain or driven over the Scottish border . . . Harvest, cattle, the very implements of husbandry so mercilessly destroyed that the famine which followed is said to have swept off more than a hundred thousand victims”.

This pitiless disregard of life followed many disasters to families of this district, and a few extracts from several previous Anglo-Saxon Chronicle entries may enable us to realise how backward and desolate our valleys had already been for many years.

This we find as far back as 874 — “This year the Danish host went to Repton ; they drove the King (of Mercia) over sea, and subdued all that he had”.

Three years later (877) — “In the harvest the Danes entered Mercia”. In 894 “the Danes marched on the stretch by day and night (from East Anglia) till they arrived at Chester (i.e. through Mercia). In 905 — “this year Ethelwald (an English traitor who had joined the Danes) over-ran all the land of Mercia”. A better note (but losses must have been great), comes in 910 — “This year the Angles and Danes fought at Tettenhall, and the Angles had the victory”. Again we note the brave struggle put up by Ethelfleda, the Lady of Mercia, Alfred’s daughter, thus — 912 “This year the Lady of the Mercians built the fortress at Bridgnorth”. 913 — “This year went Ethelfleda with all the Mercians to Tamworth, and built the fort there, and before Lammas, that at Stafford”. 918 — “This year Ethelfleda conquered the town called Derby”.

One can feel proud of the Mercian Lady, but even these efforts must have been expensive both in men and resources ; and, as we have seen, the Danes in the end retained much of North-east England. Again we quote the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle A.D. 943 : “This year Anlaf (a Danish leader) stormed Tamworth, and much slaughter was made on either hand, but the Danes had the victory, and led away much plunder”. A.D. 980 — “The county of Chester was plundered by the pirate army of the North”. A.D. 986 — “This year came the great murrain (disease) of cattle in England”.

A.D. 1002 — “The king gave an order to slay all the Danes that were in England”. This was done on the mass day of St. Bria. Redfern mentions this planned slaughter of Danes, which did not improve relations between Saxons and Norsemen. He quotes Holinshed’s Chronicle (1577) to show that where the slaughter began in uncertain, but Hound Hill near Marchington could have been one of the places concerned.

A.D. 1005 — “This year was the great famine in England, so severe that no man ere remembered such”. A.D. 1007 — “In this year the tribute paid to the hostile army (of the Danes) was 30,000 pounds”. A.D. 1016 — “This year came King Knute with 160 ships . . . Every man supposed that Edmund the Atheling and Earl Ultred of Northumbria would collect an army against Knute, but they went into Staffordshire and they plundered on their part and Knute on his”. A.D. 1039 — “This year the Welsh slew Edwin, brother of Earl Leofric”. (Leofric was Lady Godiva’s husband, father of Hereward the Wake, and lord of several manors in Uttoxeter area). We are not told much more of this campaign, but it must have involved Mercia, whether Wales was the aggressor or not).

A.D. 1040 — “This year rose the sester of wheat to fifty-five pence and even further”. (A sester was a “dry measure” but its exact size is uncertain. The name may mean the sixth part of a larger measure). A.D. 1041 — “This year King Hardicanute ordered to lay waste all Worcestershire”. A.D. 1044 — “This year there was very great hunger over all England, and corn so dear as no man remembered before ; so that the sester of wheat rose to 60 pence and even further”. 1046 — “After Candlemas came the strong winter, with frost and with snow — no man alive could remember so severe a winter, through loss of men and of cattle”. In 1052 there was great danger of civil war between King Edward and Earl Godwin and his son Harold, but peace was preserved and the Godwins returned to power. The Midlands were threatened by a Welsh army in 1055, but after one skirmish at Hereford, peace was made. After the death of Earl Leofric of Mercia, there was a brief threat of further warfare in 1058 owing to the banishment of Algar, Leofric’s successor, but he was soon restored, through Welsh assistance. In 1063 Earl Harold defeated the Welsh at Rhuddlan, and once again Mercia had relief from the continual warfare of many years.

Again, in 1065 Mercia escaped such danger, when men of Yorkshire rose against Earl Tosti (brother of Harold Godwin) and were assisted by men of Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire, and “many Britons also came” states the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. But King Edward and Earl Harold preserved peace. Even so, the northern men are said to have plundered Northamptonshire before retiring, and “took all the cattle that they could come at, so that not only that shire, but others near it were the worse for many winters”.

These extracts show that our Uttoxeter area, after centuries of suffering, must have made some progress during the more peaceful years under Edward the Confessor. This brings us to the conquest of 1066 noted above, and the return of slaughter and oppression by the Norman Conquerors in 1068. William's terrible reprisals for the rebellion have already been noted ; it is small wonder that only a few years later many places in Staffordshire were described in Domesday Book as "waste". During some of the periods when their land was over-run by Welsh, Danes, and even their own race, we know that stores of corn were buried in secret places, some of which were stone-built ; cattle too may have been at least partly saved by being driven into the many woodland areas of Staffordshire.

Another aspect of these centuries of unrest and robbery seems to have been un-noticed — the type of men surviving in 1086. The Anglo-Saxons had always been steady, persevering countrymen, and were mistakenly regarded by the Normans as slow and unintelligent. No doubt the centuries of war, with only short periods when their farms could be improved, must have caused great losses among the more active defenders of their homes and townships, so that the survivors may well have been somewhat inferior in the eyes of their new Masters of Norman blood. (The Normans themselves were descended from Norsemen who had settled in Northern France and absorbed some of the more cultured traits of that land).

But the dogged Saxon character remained, and after several centuries the English language became the national speech, despite the use of French in such words as "Parliament", "Tenant", and "Manor". This persistence of English speech and customs is all the more remarkable when one considers that old Saxon words like "Ceorl" (a freeman of a village) and "boor" (peasant farmer) had deteriorated in meaning ; under Norman feudalism such men were considered "churlish" or "boorish" by the nobility, and the word "thane — thegn", which originally meant a man of authority and dignity in Saxon times, faded away.

Yet the English stubborn tenacity has been exhibited many times in history ; Cromwell's Ironsides, the squares which stood firm at Waterloo, the determined Fusiliers at Albuera, and the bravery of the "few" R.A.F. Pilots in 1940, are evidences of this trait. We may even compare the losses of fine young men in 1914 - 1918, and 1939 - 1945 with the deaths of Anglo-Saxon leading farmers who died to save their settlements in the centuries after 449 A.D. ; a comparison which should inspire those who remain with better hope for future times.

In our next section we shall deal with what Domesday Book reveals about the Uttoxeter area ; Redfern quotes in places from this record, but a more detailed story is needed.

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